

The 'Yes' Experiment: Unlocking New Possibilities

A Lesson for Vienna

Materials Needed

- Whiteboard, large poster paper, or several pieces of plain paper
- Markers in different colors
- Index cards or small pieces of paper for "Scenario Cards"
- A small box or jar (The "Yes Jar")
- A pen or pencil
- Slips of paper for the "Yes Jar"
- (Optional) A simple, new, fun activity ready to go (e.g., ingredients for a new type of snack, a new simple craft kit, a deck of cards for a new game)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you (Vienna) will be able to:

- Identify at least two reasons why saying "no" can feel like the easiest choice.
- Explain the fun and exciting benefits of saying "yes" to new, safe opportunities.
- Use a "Safety Check" to decide when it's smart to say "no" and when it's brave to say "yes."
- Practice saying "yes" to a new, fun activity in a comfortable way.

Introduction (5-10 minutes)

The Hook: A Story of Adventure

Educator says: "Imagine your favorite character from a book or movie—let's say someone like Luna Lovegood from Harry Potter or maybe a cool explorer. Do they have amazing adventures by always doing the exact same thing every day? Or do they have adventures because they say 'yes' to unexpected things? Like when a map suddenly appears, or a friend asks for help on a strange quest? Usually, the most exciting stories start with a 'yes'!"

"Today, Vienna, we're going to become adventure scientists. Our mission is to explore the power of saying 'yes' and see what amazing things can happen when we decide to step just a little bit outside of what's familiar. We're not talking about saying yes to things that are unsafe or scary in a bad way. We're talking about saying yes to fun, new experiences."

Let's Talk About Our Goals

Educator says: "By the end of our time, you'll be an expert at figuring out why you might say 'no,' you'll know all the cool reasons to say 'yes,' and you'll have a secret tool to help you decide. Best of all, we'll put it into practice with a fun 'Yes' challenge!"

Body: The Adventure Zone (25-30 minutes)

Part 1: The Comfort Zone vs. The Growth Zone (I Do)

Educator says: "Let's draw two big circles. This first one," (draws a circle) "we'll call the **Comfort Zone**. This is where everything is familiar and easy. Like watching your favorite movie for the 10th time or eating your favorite snack. It's nice and cozy here, but does a lot of new, exciting stuff happen? Not usually."

"Now, this second circle," (draws a bigger circle around the first one) "is the **Growth Zone**. This is where adventures happen! It's where you try a new food, learn a new skill, or explore a new place. It can feel a little tingly or nervous at first, and that's totally normal! That feeling is just your brain realizing you're about to learn something new. This is where we grow braver and discover awesome new things about ourselves."

Part 2: The 'No' Detectives (We Do)

Educator says: "Okay, Detective Vienna, let's investigate. Why do our brains sometimes shout 'NO!' when we're asked to try something new, even if it's totally safe? What are some of the reasons?"

(Brainstorm together and write down Vienna's ideas. Guide if needed with prompts.)

- "Maybe I think I'll be bad at it."
- "What if I don't like it?"
- "It feels like a lot of work."
- "I'm feeling a little shy or tired today."
- "I just don't know what to expect."

Educator says: "These are all super normal feelings! Everyone feels this way sometimes. Naming these feelings helps us understand why 'no' can feel like a cozy blanket. But sometimes, that blanket keeps us from a really fun party!"

Part 3: The 'Yes' Safety Check (We Do)

Educator says: "This is the most important part of our mission. Saying 'yes' is awesome, but saying 'no' is also a superpower! We only say 'yes' to things that are good for us. So, we need a Safety Check. Let's create it together."

(Create a checklist on the whiteboard or paper. This empowers Vienna with boundaries.)

Our Safety Check

1. Is this safe for my mind and body?
2. Is this kind to me and to other people?
3. Would a trusted adult (like Mom, Dad, or me) be okay with this?
4. Does this feel right in my heart?

Educator says: "If the answer to any of these is 'no,' then saying 'NO' is the strong, smart, and right thing to do! This lesson is about saying 'yes' to the things that pass our Safety Check."

Part 4: The Scenario Sorting Game (You Do)

Educator says: "Now it's your turn to be the decision-maker! I have some cards here with different situations. Your job is to read each one, use our Safety Check, and decide if it's a good chance to *consider* saying 'yes', or if it's a time for a 'Smart No'."

(Prepare these scenarios on index cards beforehand.)

- **Card 1:** Your parent asks if you want to help cook dinner, but it's a recipe you've never tried before.
- **Card 2:** At a family gathering, your cousin asks if you want to learn a new, complicated-looking board game.
- **Card 3:** Someone you don't know sends you a message online and asks for your home address.
- **Card 4:** Your art teacher suggests you try using watercolors instead of your usual colored pencils.
- **Card 5:** A friend dares you to do something that you know breaks a family rule.

(Discuss Vienna's choices for each card, praising her thoughtful reasoning, especially on the 'Smart No' examples.)

Success Criteria: You've succeeded when you can explain *why* you sorted each card into its pile, using the Safety Check as your guide.

Conclusion: The First 'Yes' (10-15 minutes)

Recap Our Mission

Educator says: "Awesome work, Vienna! Let's quickly recap. What are the two zones we talked about? (Comfort and Growth). What's one reason our brain might say 'no'? And what is the most important question on our Safety Check?"

(Listen to Vienna's answers and reinforce the main ideas.)

Summative Assessment: The 'Yes' Jar Challenge

Educator says: "You've proven you're an expert decision-maker. Now it's time to put it into action. This is the 'Yes Jar!'"

(Show the jar with slips of paper inside. The slips should contain simple, low-pressure, fun activities.)

Examples for the Jar:

- "Let's learn how to fold an origami frog together."
- "Let's try a 5-minute 'draw with your eyes closed' challenge."
- "Let's put on some music and have a 3-minute dance party."
- "Let's go outside and try to identify three different types of clouds."

Educator says: "Each of these is a safe, new, small adventure. They all pass our Safety Check. Would you like to say **'yes'** to pulling one out and we can do it right now?"

(Let Vienna pull a slip. Whatever it is, do it with enthusiasm! This creates a positive and immediate reward for her brave 'yes'.)

Reflection and Takeaway

After the activity, ask: "How did that feel? Was it scary, fun, silly? Was it what you expected? See how a tiny 'yes' can lead to something fun and memorable?"

Educator says: "Your adventure for this week is to notice one small, safe opportunity to say 'yes' when you might normally say 'no.' It could be trying a new fruit, reading a different kind of book, or offering to help with a new task. You are officially a member of the 'Yes' Adventure Club!"

Differentiation & Adaptability

- **For a more hesitant learner:** Start the 'Yes' Jar with extremely simple choices she has control over, like "Choose the music for the next 10 minutes" or "Pick which color marker I use next." Build up from there.
- **For a learner ready for more:** Challenge Vienna to create her own "Yes Jar" slips with new skills she wants to learn or activities she's curious about. She could also create a "Yes Journal" to write about her experiences when she tries something new.
- **For different contexts:** In a classroom, this can be a group discussion and the "Yes Jar" can have activities for pairs or the whole class. In a training context, scenarios can be adapted to professional situations like volunteering for a new project.